



Press Release

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES \$22 MILLION IN NEW GRANTS TO MISSISSIPPI

Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge today announced \$22 million in grants to Mississippi to fund first responders and support state and local resources necessary to prevent, respond and recover from acts of terrorism and other disasters. The announcement was part of a nationwide announcement of over \$2.5 billion in direct assistance to state and local governments for their preparedness and planning needs. These funds augment the nearly \$9 billion already delivered to state and local governments and first responders since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security.

“This funding enhances the preparedness of the entire nation while targeting resources where they are needed most,” said Secretary Ridge. “We have implemented a national strategy for homeland security that includes shared responsibility and accountability in equipping our frontline first responders with the resources they need to protect our citizens. The continuing maturation of our grants programs, streamlined distribution process and greater accountability measures will ensure that, with this new allocation of over \$2.5 billion, we are even better enhancing the capabilities of our nation’s first responders to prevent terrorism and respond to emergencies. State and local jurisdictions can expect even more support in the coming months, as we announce further awards in port security, mass transit security and assistance to fire fighters.”

Under the state Homeland Security Grant Program, Mississippi has received \$22,081,006 as a tailored portion of the \$1.66 billion in grants, based on a formula consisting of a baseline amount plus the population of the state or territory. The funding is used for equipment, training, planning and exercises.

The recipients of this round of FY’05 Homeland Security grants will benefit from new measures recently adopted following recommendations from a task force convened by Secretary Ridge to expedite the flow of funds. State and local governments may now have up to 120 days to draw down funds in advance of purchase and investments, as compared to the three to five days

allowed previously, so that even small localities have the buying power to purchase expensive or backordered equipment. The Department of Homeland Security also has hosted training seminars and coordination calls with states and urban areas to ensure that they are coordinating to prevent delays in the funding flow. Combined with a streamlined online application process, these statutory and educational measures will help Homeland Security funds flow as fast as possible to the hands that need them.

The Department of Homeland Security is ensuring that taxpayer dollars are being used to meet the real security goals and objectives identified by the states. All 56 states and territories and the UASI areas have conducted risk, capability, and needs assessments, and have developed multi-year homeland security strategies as a condition of grant awards. The department maintains oversight controls with onsite monitoring of all states, territories and UASI areas, and our reporting requirements provide additional oversight to ensure that states and localities spend their grants for the homeland security priorities identified in those state strategies.

“With these new grants, the Department of Homeland Security is building upon nearly \$9 billion already allocated to equip, train and prepare our first responders and local law enforcement to prevent incidents and to be ready should one occur,” said C. Suzanne Mencer, Executive Director of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness. “I have visited states and communities and observed restored emergency operations centers, sophisticated equipment, multi-discipline exercises and new networks of communication and planning. I am inspired by the efforts conducted by these homeland security professionals across the country. This new round of grants will enhance the work already underway and address the new priorities that the department and our state and local partners continue to identify.”

(Appendix A: List of UASI and Homeland Security Grant Program Recipients)

(Appendix B: Breakdown of Urban Area Security Initiative Recipients)

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